Having regard to the adverse market situation affecting the various agricultural products, not only in Kerala but in other parts of the country, the Commodity Boards have initiated a number of schemes to assist the growers in marketing their products in the domestic as well as international markets.

Import of agricultural goods under OGL

* 334. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether certain agricultural commodities can be imported under OGL;

(b) if so, the details of such commodities;

(c) whether there is an adverse impact of such imports on domestic prices of agricultural commodities; and

(d) if so, the protection given to the domestic agricultural products so that they can compete with imported agricultural products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY): (a) to (d) Import restrictions on items including agricultural commodities are being removed as a part of economic liberalization programme of the Government and also in terms of our international obligations. At present, all the items on which import restrictions were maintained on account of balance of payment reasons arc freely importable.

A Statement showing import of major agricultural commodities during April, 2001-January, 2002, for which data is available, compared with April, 2000-January, 2001 is enclosed at annexure. As can be seen from the import data this level of imports may not have any serious impact on the domestic prices of agricultural commodities.

However imports are constantly being closely monitored and the Government is determined to ensure, through appropriate use of tariff and other mechanisms, that imports do not cause any serious detriment or injury to the domestic farmers. Towards that end,

import duties on a number of items, where increases in imports were noticed, have already been increased. In the budget for the year 2000-2001, import of duties on many of the agricultural items, (Chapter 1 to 24 ITC (HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items, 1997—2002), were increased to provide further protection to domestic farmers, *e.g.* duty on rice was increased from 0% to upto 80%, on maize from 0% to 50%, on apples from 35% to 50%, on wheat raised to 50%. Similarly, in the budget for the year 2001-2002, the custom duty on coconut, copra, tea and coffee was raised from 35% to 70%. The import duty on various refined edible oils excepting soyabean oil was raised upto 85%. Also, the import duty on crude palmolein oil was raised to 65% and on other crude edible oils excepting soyabean oil duty was raised upto 75%. In the budget for the year 2002-2003, the custom duty on tea and coffee has been further raised from 70% to 100%, on natural rubber latex (Code No. 4001.10) from 35% to 70%, on cloves, cardamom, pepper and poppy seeds from 35% to 70%, and on pulses from 5% to 10%.

Statement

Import of major agricultural commodities during April, 2000-January, 2001 and April, 2001-January, 2002

Qty. in tons. Value in Rs. Crorc

SI. No.	Items	Apr. Jan. 2001		Apr. Jan. 2002	
		Quantity	Value	Quantity	Value
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Wheat	4224	2.87	1351	0.84
2.	Rice	8260	11.56	62	0.06
3.	Other Cereals	30109	15.16	4156	2.60
4.	Pulses	226920	335.65	1823739	2635.23
5.	Tea	9475	33.58	8664	49.21
6.	Cashew Nuts	230401	905.50	148772	394.25
7.	Fruits & Nuts Excl Cashew Nuts	N.A.	713.85	N.A	641.94

1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	Spices	37536	210.31	89544	372.74
9.	Sugar	22732	21.82	26567	32.53
10.	Oil Seeds	N.A.	5.49	N.A.	1.35
11.	Natural Rubber	8083	27.77	42404	126.77
12.	Jute Raw	57911	71.22	63615	76.05
13.	Silk Raw	3989	398.81	5081	477.66
14.	Cotton Raw: Comb/ Uncomb/Waste	195080	1080.48	334031	1791.94

[SOURCE: DGCI&S]

Progress of oil refinery at Paradip

* 335. SHRI MAN MOHAN SAMAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Oil Corporation is going slow on the Paradip Oil Refinery Project despite all clearances/concessions given by the State Government;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the details of bottlenecks in completing the project in time?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) is presently reviewing its Paradip Oil Refinery Project for the revised project cost and the completion schedule in the light of the demand and supply projections of petroleum products in the country.

The time schedules for completion of the project stipulated at the time of its approval in July 1998 have been affected due to the following:

(i) Withdrawal of Joint Venture partner Kuwait Petroleum Corporation from the Project;

(ii) Withdrawal of sales tax concessions by the Government of Orissa in February 2000, affecting the viability of the